



**Homeland
Security**

July 11, 2006

News Release

Inland Empire man arrested at Calexico border crossing for transporting child pornography

ICE investigation ongoing as agency's Operation Predator arrests top 2,000 in California

CALEXICO, Calif. – An Inland Empire man is under investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) after his arrest here last week when a search of his vehicle at a local port of entry turned up a videotape showing him engaging in explicit sexual conduct with a young boy who appeared to be heavily sedated.

Earl Venton Buchanan, 62, was arrested July 3 by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers upon returning from a visit to Mexico. At the time of his arrest, Buchanan was accompanied by a five-year-old Riverside County boy who is not a relative.

Noting that Buchanan appeared nervous, CBP officers referred him for further questioning. According to court documents, a search of Buchanan's vehicle turned up the videotape as well as sedative medication. CBP notified ICE agents who opened a formal investigation.

The following day, ICE agents obtained a federal warrant to search Buchanan's large residential compound in Bloomington, California. As a result of the search, agents seized two computers, numerous videotapes, and copies of several children's United States birth certificates, all of which are being analyzed at this time. According to affidavits filed in the case, the bachelor's home featured a large children's playroom furnished with bunk beds and filled with toys, videogames, and children's DVDs.

Buchanan made his initial appearance in federal court here July 5 on charges of transporting child pornography. ICE agents say the investigation is ongoing and additional federal charges are likely. ICE is receiving substantial assistance in the case from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

The youth who was with Buchanan at the time of his arrest has been turned over to local child protective services. Prior to the incident, the child was being cared for by a family member in Riverside County.

“The outstanding work performed by the CBP officer at the Calexico port to intercept this violation is indicative of the dedicated efforts and expertise of our officers throughout the border region,” said Adele Fasano, CBP director of field operations in San Diego. “CBP’s mission is to protect the American public from dangerous criminals and contraband. Child pornography is a serious criminal violation for which we will actively continue to search and confiscate.”

“Our investigation into this matter is ongoing and we want to urge anyone who has information related to the case to call ICE’s tip line,” said Miguel Unzueta, special agent in charge of the ICE office of investigations in San Diego. “If there are other children involved, it’s important that we find them, both for our sake and for theirs.”

To report any information related to this case, the public should contact ICE’s tip line at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by ICE investigators.

Buchanan’s arrest is part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative launched in 2003 to identify, investigate, arrest and, in the case of foreign nationals, deport child sex predators. California leads the nation in the number of Operation Predator arrests, this month surpassing the 2,000 mark. Overall, the initiative has resulted in more than 8,200 arrests nationwide. Other states with a significant number of arrests are: Texas (763), New York (555), New Jersey (547), Florida (421), Illinois (417), Arizona (271), Oregon (228), Wisconsin (226), and Minnesota (218).

ICE encourages members of the public to report suspicious activity to ICE at 1-866-DHS-2ICE, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678 or www.cybertipline.com. Additional information about Operation Predator is posted at www.ice.gov.

###